

**Resolution on Language Access**  
**City of Minneapolis**  
*Draft: October 15, 2003*

Background and Findings

1. Minneapolis has experienced a rapid and large increase in the number of residents who speak a language other than English.
2. In 2001-2002, 30% of the students in the Minneapolis Public Schools spoke a language other than English at home, up from 21% in 1989-1990 (source: Minnesota Department of Children, Families, and Learning).
3. In the 2000 Census, 55,475 Minneapolis residents (14.5% of the City's population) reported being foreign born, with 37,476 residents (9.8%) having entered in the last ten years.
4. In the 2000 Census, 68,935 residents (19.3%) reported speaking a language other than English at home. 37,693 residents (10.5%) said that they speak English less than very well.
5. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 states that no person shall on the ground of national origin "be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."
6. The Department of Justice has issued guidelines on compliance with Title VI for recipients of federal funds, effective June 12, 2002, stating that "Title VI and its implementing regulations require that recipients take responsible steps to ensure meaningful access by LEP [Limited English Proficient] persons" (Federal Register June 18, 2002, p. 41457).
7. In August 2000 the City of Minneapolis Interdepartmental New Arrivals Work Group issued a report entitled "Welcoming New Arrivals to Minneapolis: Issues and Recommendations."
8. The Work Group surveyed City departments on language access issues. In response to a question about what staff had done to overcome language barriers, the most common response (47%) was "Use client's friends/family members as interpreters" ("Welcoming New Arrivals, Appendix 2).
9. The City departments identified as priorities:
  - a. Quick, convenient, and effective interpreting and translation services.
  - b. Staff training on culture and language.

- c. Identifying and developing relationships with individuals and organizations in new arrival communities.
  - d. Hiring more bilingual and bicultural staff.
10. The Work Group identified three options for the City. Option 3 involved creating an Office of New Arrivals with four full time staff people. On September 15, 2000, the City Council voted that it preferred Option 3 and urged Mayor Sayles Belton to incorporate Option 3 into her recommended 2001 budget.
  11. The City has not fully implemented Option 3. It created a Multicultural Services offices with full time positions for a Spanish speaker and a Somali speaker. It has not created positions for a coordinator or for other liaisons.
  12. In 2003, the budget for Multicultural Services included general fund money and \$120,000 in CDBG funds. The Mayor's proposed CDBG budget for 2004 does not include any funding for Multicultural Services.
  13. The Health Department estimates the cost to fully fund Multicultural Services at \$350,000.

Now Therefore,

14. Each City Department is instructed to take responsible steps to ensure meaningful access by LEP persons to its programs, services and activities.
15. The Mayor and Council will direct the City Coordinator to form an interdepartmental LEP Planning Task Force to create an LEP Plan for the City and to ensure meaningful access and a consistent, comprehensive, and efficient approach to language access issues. The planning process will include participation by LEP persons and organizations who represent them. The LEP Plan will be finished within 9 months of the date of this Resolution.
16. The Task Force will use the LEP Guidance from the Department of Justice and other federal departments as appropriate as a guide to the minimum acceptable steps to provide meaningful access.
17. The Departments and the Task Force will also identify and implement appropriate measures to improve language access that can be accomplished immediately and in the short term, before the LEP Plan is adopted.
18. The City's 2004 budget will include appropriate resources for the development and implementation of the LEP plan.

19. By December 31, 2004, the City Coordinator, Human Resources, and Multicultural Services will work together to train all City staff who have contact with LEP persons in how to provide meaningful language access.
20. Meaningful access includes measures such as:
  - a. creating, monitoring, and updating an LEP plan;
  - b. identifying and tracking language preferences of people using or potentially using City services;
  - c. interpreting by interpreters with proven competency, provided by the City;
  - d. translating of vital written documents, provided by the City;
  - e. providing notice to LEP persons of the free services available;
  - f. training staff in language access issues and procedures.
21. By January 30, 2004, the City Coordinator and Multicultural Services will work together to notify all City staff who may have contact with LEP persons of some of the basic principles of language access, including:
  - a. The right of LEP persons to free, city-provided interpreting and translation to ensure meaningful access to city programs, benefits, or activities;
  - b. The fact that staff should not require or urge an LEP person to provide his or her own interpreter or translator;
  - c. The fact that minors should not be used as interpreters;
  - d. The problems and conflicts inherent in the use of family or friends as interpreters;
  - e. The availability of interpreting and translating resources, including the City's Multicultural services staff, other bilingual city staff, and contracted interpreters and translators.